

《外國語文研究》第二十七期 抽印本  
2017年十二月 81~124頁

「東京大飯店」——德國  
‘賽伯龐克’流行音樂文化  
中的後現代身體

**Tokio Hotel and the Postmodern Body  
in German ‘Cyberpunk’-Pop Music Culture**

蔡莫妮

Monika Leipelt Tsai

# 「東京大飯店」——德國「賽伯龐克」 流行音樂文化中的後現代身體

蔡莫妮\*

摘要\*\*

德國音樂團體「東京大飯店」為求鞏固其流行地位，時常自我重塑。當我們在探索近年歐洲及其他地區的青年文化潮流時，能看到這樣自我重塑的展現，讓該團體所引領的現象，成為值得被關注的研究主題。我們會探索德國流行音樂的全新意象：其意象不僅對青年族群傳述著特異獨行的酷兒訊息。還能讓我們思考詭譎議題與科技的連結，以 Bachmann-Medick 的「文化即文本」，將其意象來當作文本閱讀。在這文化研究中，我們會將德語歌曲“Automatisch”（樂團 2009 年專輯）的官方正式音樂錄影帶和歌詞裡所呈現的意象會當作範例，進行分析，同時討論此歌的現場演出。這首歌曲中，時常出現自動操作的主題，並且緊扣著流行音樂這類型。樂團「東京大飯店」的現場演出，以一種詭譎的方式，如藝術般引人注目地，重新定義人體為科技。樂團「東京大飯店」呈現的意象提出了身體概念的問題，讓我們沉思一種新的後性別身份，尤其從德國觀點來看，在這個「網絡」的資訊科技時代中，這樣的後性別身份已成為歐洲青年文化主要的一環。

**關鍵詞：**「東京大飯店」、德國文化研究、詭譎、後現代身體、多那哈洛維

---

\* 國立政治大學歐洲語文學系副教授  
2017年7月11日投稿 2017年11月20日通過

\*\* 這項研究得到了科技部的支持（批准號 MOST 103-2410-H-004-149）。由於篇幅有限的關係，對“後現代主義”概念的討論（包括著名不可能的現代主義之後的雙關語）必須留待未來的文章。

## Tokio Hotel and the Postmodern Body in German ‘Cyberpunk’-Pop Music Culture

Monika Leipelt-Tsai\*

### Abstract\*\*

To remain popular, the German music band “Tokio Hotel” consistently reinvents itself,<sup>1</sup> allowing the phenomenon this group exemplifies to be considered as a research topic of notable interest when locating trends in recent youth culture in Europe and beyond. We will unfold a new kind of imagery in German pop that transmits a queer message to the youth<sup>2</sup> and can be read as text in the sense of Bachmann-Medick’s “culture as text”<sup>3</sup> concerning the issue of uncanniness and its connection to technology. For this cultural study, the imagery of the official music video of the German song “Automatisch” (from the band’s 2009 album) including its lyrics will be exemplarily analyzed together with a recording of the song’s live performance. In this song automation is thematically used and interconnected with the genre of pop music. Their corresponding live performance displays a compelling artistic redefinition of the human body as technology in an uncanny way. The question of body concepts within the imagery of Tokio Hotel reveals a path to contemplating a new kind of playful post-gender identity that becomes a broad part of European youth culture, especially from a German perspective, inside this technical information age of the “cyber.”

**Keywords:** Tokio Hotel, German culture studies, uncanniness, postmodern body, Donna Haraway

---

\* Associate Professor, Department of European Languages and Cultures, National Chengchi University

\*\* This research was supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan, R.O.C. under Grant No. MOST 103-2410-H-004-149. Due to limited space a discussion of the concept of “postmodernism” (including the famous pun on its impossibility of the time after modernism) has to be left to a future article.

<sup>1</sup> In their “Dream Machine” world tour 2017, the group is redefined as ‘Electro-Pop Quartet.’ Due to its emphasis on imagery this essay refrains from a more in-depth textual and musical analysis.

<sup>2</sup> This is important in order to protect societies from future hate crimes against the subaltern (like e.g., the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting, cf. Barry, Dan. “Realizing It’s a Small, Terrifying World After All. The New York Times. This Land. Orlando Shooting, 20.06.2016. “2016 Orlando nightclub shooting,” <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/21/us/orlando-shooting-america.html?rref=collection%2Fnewseventcollection%2F2016-orlando-shooting&action=click&contentCollection=us&region=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection>>; 26 Apr 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Following the anthropological turn in literary studies, the concept of ‘culture as text’ arose out of criticism of overemphasizing mental processes and intentions. This goes beyond a presupposed autonomous immanent textual meaning and became a more comprehensive, textually oriented cultural theory that is based on contextualization and attribution of social meaning by its involved recipients (Bachmann-Medick, Doris. “Culture as Text: Reading and Interpreting Cultures.” Neumann, Birgit, Ansgar Nünning. *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012. 99-118, here cf. 101-103). Against this background, this essay uses the method of constellation as methodological epistemology that facilitates to open up conceptual spaces and dynamical interlinking for the analysis.

# Tokio Hotel and the Postmodern Body in German ‘Cyberpunk’-Pop Music Culture

Monika Leipelt-Tsai

Amidst today’s never ending stream of Tweets and Instagrams it can often appear next to impossible to successfully identify a youth culture for any significant period of time. It seems unsurprising then that, in order to keep up with the speed of current media practices, many pop and music acts find the need to adapt by consistently reinventing themselves, both visually and musically, to maintain their appeal.<sup>1</sup> This is a feat that the music band “Tokio Hotel”, one of the world’s most successful contemporary German speaking bands<sup>2</sup> who started out as punk rock band “Devilish” (Leipelt-Tsai 2011, 254) has performed with fascinating results<sup>3</sup>. In the following, an analysis of the imagery created in the official music video of the song “Automatic” and a recording of the song’s live performance shall be conducted including a constellation<sup>4</sup> with excerpts

---

<sup>1</sup> In order to be commercially available music products have to be sold to an audience, and its marketing always ascribes a certain alleged ‘authentic’ identity to the artist. In a simplistic dichotomy, an older audience sometimes accuses the band as only being a ‘marketing strategy’ (cf. Leipelt-Tsai, Monika. “Tokio Hotel. Articulation of the Subaltern in German Pop Culture?” Ed. Chang, Tai-Lin. *New Trends in Contemporary European Literature, Culture and Language*. National Chengchi University, Institute of Foreign Languages, European Culture Research Center Taipei 2011, 245-280; here 254), still, identities are never natural but constructed. The problem of authenticity as such has to be left to another discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs-Ganböck, Michael. Thorsten Schatz. *Jetzt und wir: Neue deutsche Bands zwischen Soundcheck und Lebensgefühl*. München: Knauer, 2008. 204.

<sup>3</sup> Tokio Hotel intensively uses new media platforms to stay in contact with their fans. In 2011, they received the “Fan Army FTW” award at the MTV O Music Awards, Anitai, Tamar. “O Music Awards: Tokio Hotel Wins Fan Army FTW Award!” *MTV News Celebrity*, <<http://www.mtv.com/news/2297943/o-music-awards-tokio-hotel-fan-army-mtv-omas/>> 9 Jul 2011.

<sup>4</sup> The constellation as a figure of thought was incorporated by the cultural studies and goes back to Walter Benjamin (cf. Lethen, Helmut, Annegret Pelz, Michael Rohrwasser. “Vorwort.” (Preface) Idem (Eds.) *Konstellationen – Versuchsanordnungen des Schreibens*. Göttingen: Vienna Univ. Press, 2013, 7-10, here 9).

of Donna J. Haraway's "A manifesto for Cyborgs."<sup>5</sup> We open up the following questions: What strategies can be read in the music video and the performance of Tokio Hotel? What kind of visual image structure is generated in this new (post)modern image of their lead singer Bill Kaulitz? What new important form of ambivalence of meaning is constructed on the symbolic level in the images, and what role does gender play? Moreover, following the open process of semiosis of any language signifier, we will try to shift the thinking of the term "cyberpunk" in order to emphasize a new meaning, adding to its broad signification. The imagery<sup>6</sup> shown by Tokio Hotel in their music video and stage will be read with Donna J. Haraway's concept of the cyborg as "a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction (...) that changes what counts as women's experience,"<sup>7</sup> and brings to the fore the social struggle of the subjected youth. This interlinking demonstrates that Tokio Hotel's new imagery of a hybrid of machine and organism indicates a new identity politics especially for the female and subaltern youth.

### What is Cyberpunk?

The term "cyber" often signifies computerized processes and the generated virtual worlds that are related to such. Its etymology goes back to the ancient Greek prefix "kybér-", from kybérnesis, meaning "control" and the navigator's "art of control."<sup>8</sup> In 1948, Norbert Wiener applied this term to data processing in his book *Cybernetics or control and communication in the animal and the machine* (ibid.) and thus the history

---

<sup>5</sup> Haraway, Donna J. "A manifesto for Cyborgs. Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's." (1984). Neil Badmington and Julia Thomas (Eds.) *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. London, New York, 2008. 324-355.

<sup>6</sup> This article is mainly concerned about the issue of the imagery and the performance of the band, the question of the musical track(s) will not be touched and has to be left to another examination.

<sup>7</sup> Haraway, Donna. "A manifesto for Cyborgs. Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's." (1984). Neil Badmington und Julia Thomas (Eds.) *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. London, New York, 2008. 324-355, here 324.

<sup>8</sup> "Cyber", *Wikipedia Deutsch*, <<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyber>>; 8 Mar 2015.

of computer science and computers began in parallel with the coining of the term “cyber” (ibid.).

In literary criticism the English term “cyberpunk” refers to a subgenre of Sci-fi writing, the future settings of which are noted for their focus on advanced technological regulatory systems, i.e. cybernetics, intertwined with radical change in the social order, a noir plotting, and a punk attitude. With roots going back to the 1950s, not long after the advent of cybernetics, the writer Bruce Bethke is the first person known to have used the term in his story “Cyberpunk” published in the magazine *Amazing* in 1983<sup>9</sup>, with the most famous work within this genre being the classic 1984 novel “Neuromancer” by American-Canadian novelist William Gibson, written shortly before the home computer revolution of the 1980s. Its protagonist is a master hacker who is able to send himself into the computer network and lives in a near-future world dominated by those networks, Japanese corporations, and possibly artificially intelligent entities (Butler 9). The cyberpunk movement broadened to feminist versions of cyberpunk, post-cyberpunk and “cyberpunk-flavoured fictions,” (ibid. 15) as well as cyberpunk films like *Blade Runner* (1982) and *The Matrix* (1999). In Germany however, few novels could be considered as cyberpunk fiction.<sup>10</sup> Still, that is not to say that cyberpunk has not managed to spread into other areas of culture, including pop music.

To locate this emergence of cyberpunk within music an examination of the term “punk” becomes useful. Its etymology is unknown. Still, in 1896 the term “punk” indicated something negative as “inferior, bad,”<sup>11</sup> and as a noun “something worthless,”

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Butler, Andrew M. *Cyberpunk. The Pocket Essential*. Harpenden (UK): Oldcastle Books Ltd, 2000, 19.

<sup>10</sup> One of the few notable German authors in this regard is Gert Heidenreich, a writer especially of detective novels. His 1995 novel *Die Nacht der Händler* (‘The night of the dealers’) deals with the motif of the monetary system and seems a bit cyberpunk-flavored. It received the Fantasy Prize of the City Wetzlar, Germany in 1995 (Phantastikpreis der Stadt Wetzlar. Phantastische Bibliothek Wetzlar, <<http://www.phantastik.eu/veranstaltungen/wetzlarer-tage-der-phantastik-uebersicht>>, 23 Sep 2014).

<sup>11</sup> “punk,” Online Etymology Dictionary, <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=punk>>, 8 Jun 2017.

earlier “rotten wood used as tinder” (ibid.). It labeled and still labels someone as a worthless person, among others, “especially a young hoodlum (...), probably from punk kid “criminal’s apprentice,” underworld slang” (ibid.). “Punk” as derogatory noun meaning “worthless trash” also categorizes a youth subculture with a proletarian attitude that emerged as a political movement during the mid-1970s<sup>12</sup> in the United Kingdom. By the 1980s punk had spread to many other countries, including Germany. In its various forms it often included an ideology that can be said to be characterized by anti-establishment views and the promotion of individual freedom in a way that challenges traditional society. In 1980s West Germany, punk signaled an image of progress and became a fashion and music style for youth on the lookout for a provocative anti-consumer oriented identity profile.<sup>13</sup>

As punk music diversified and evolved it can be seen that “cyberpunk” shifted from its initial literary discourse to additionally mark a certain style of Avant-garde popular rock music whose roots were influenced by the heritage of punk but also bore a connection to the ‘cyber’ as the culture of information technology and virtual reality, when, in 1993, the British musician Billy Idol released a punk rock music album with the name “Cyberpunk.”<sup>14</sup> To promote the album he put out a single with the comprehensive title “Shock to the System” (ibid.). Idol, who is known for making use of punk iconography in constructing his artist imagery (with the tropes of punk fashion, e.g., dog chains, etc.), stated that he was trying to capture the political and economic conflict that started the 1992 Los Angeles riots.<sup>15</sup> The music video that was created for

---

<sup>12</sup> “punk,” Shuker, Roy. *Key Concepts in Popular Music*. London: Routledge, 1998, 236-239.

<sup>13</sup> Rumpf, Wolfgang. “Lob der Dilettanten: Kanonisierungen des Punk in der Zeitschrift *Sounds* 1977/1978.” Helms, Dietrich, Thomas Phleps (Eds.) *No time for Losers. Charts, Listen und andere Kanonisierungen in der populären Musik*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2008. 113-125, here 115.

<sup>14</sup> “Billy Idol - Shock to the system” (“Cyberpunk” Album) official video, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx2fZU5USus&feature=youtu.be>>; 9 Jul 2017. In the following ibid.

<sup>15</sup> “Billy Idol - Making Of Cyberpunk + ABC In Concert Interview With Billy And Timothy Leary – 1993”, *MTV News report*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zcq-KHzHkY&feature=youtu.be>>; 10 Jul 2017.

the song is set in a dystopian future controlled by cyber-cops, where a witness, played by Idol, records a police beating with his camcorder. His camera is destroyed when he is noticed and beaten by the cops, and his equipment is absorbed into his body, morphing him into a threatening cyborg with a cyclopean camera lens eye. The animation reveals Idol as a cyborg filled with many wires in his open chest, passively spasming from sudden shocks to his nervous system. Idol explained that “man and machine joined together to make the album” (ibid.), and that the camcorder was “an important metaphor for technology used in rebellion,”<sup>16</sup> indicating a connection between punk music and technology.

“Cyborg” is a coinage that consists of the two words “cybernetic” and “organism.”<sup>17</sup> According to Doris Leibetseder, “cyb-org” is itself a hybrid of cybernetic and organism, and denotes a new kind of ‘technology-body-relationship’ (ibid.). The cyborg in Idol’s “Cyberpunk” video can already be seen as an indication that cyberpunk in popular music may be associated with rebellion (like punk itself, but with links to new technology as well), and that the invasive modification of the human body is one common feature in narratives of cyberpunk. The connection between music and rebellious anti-establishment views can be deemed typical of punk music. The cultural theorist Diedrich Diederichsen argues that

“Punk is decidedly the sarcastic answer (...) to the wrong inclusion, the forced love (incl. child abuse) of (largely) American hippie culture and is based on the determination of a necessary precondition of liberation. Only in the shadow of hatred, negation and isolation grows the truth. This truth is, however, believed with the same emphasis as in the hippie culture.”<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> “Shock to the System (Billy Idol song)”, *Wikipedia English*,

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock\\_to\\_the\\_System\\_%28Billy\\_Idol\\_song%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock_to_the_System_%28Billy_Idol_song%29)>; 26 May 201.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Leibetseder, Doris. *Queere Tracks. Subversive Strategien in der Rock- und Popmusik*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2010, 229.

<sup>18</sup> Diederichsen, Diedrich. *Über die Popmusik*. 2nd edition, Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2014, 389 (translated from German by the author).

Following Diederichsen, the basic attitude and cultural practice of punk seems to be a kind of antithetical reaction to the former hippie culture of their parents' culture. However, with its belief in a singularity of truth, punk can be distinguished from the development of cyberpunk, though technological connections can already be found in the rudiments of punk, as exemplified by the names of early punk dances, such as “the robot, the pogo and the pose, presenting collages of frozen automata.”<sup>19</sup>

Another important link to new technology and robotics resides in images of electronic pop music culture. Interestingly, Diederichsen interrelates (somewhat Kittleresque) the beginning of modern pop music not only to the switch in media from radio to the record player in the 1950s, but also to the start of NASA's manned space flights, as both seem to be dynamic forms of upheaval in cultural practice at the time (ibid. XV f.). Notably, German pop music had connections to modern technology that are of cultural significance, stressing functionality and rationality in popular music. The German electronic music band Kraftwerk is famous for employing humanoid robots in their music videos instead of actual members. Already by 1978, the humanoid robot had become the central visual concept of their album “The Man Machine” (“Die Roboter”),<sup>20</sup> reminiscent of NASA influenced design aesthetics and Russian Suprematism art.

While in the early 1980s, the image of the robot emerged as topic in electronic pop and punk, now, contemporary German pop music manages to combine newer concepts of the body with these earlier “cyber” themes. As our examination will show, new cyberpunk pop music images differ from them, as well as from those of the literary discourse of cyberpunk novels, generally dominated by masculinism in which queer

---

<sup>19</sup> Brake, Michael. *Comparative youth culture. The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1985, 78.

<sup>20</sup> “Kraftwerk – live at the museum.” Deutsche Welle. *PopXport extra*, 17.08.2013, <<http://www.dw.de/popxport-special-9-kraftwerk-2013-08-17/e-16969142-9798>>; 28 Oct 2014.

characters rarely feature,<sup>21</sup> shifting the meaning of the term “cyberpunk.”

### “Humanoid.” The cover of the album

The third studio album “Humanoid” by Tokio Hotel, recorded in Hamburg, Germany, was released on October 2, 2009 in Germany and four days later in the U.S, selling around one million copies worldwide<sup>22</sup>. The album was recorded in German and English and both versions were released simultaneously. A connection to Asia can also be found as in 2010, Tokio Hotel performed concerts for the promotion of this album in Asia, concluding with a series of mini-concerts in Taiwan. At the end of a second promotional tour in 2011, their album had reached gold status in several countries, including Taiwan.<sup>23</sup>

A look at the album cover for “Humanoid”<sup>24</sup> to examine the narrative Tokio Hotel draws from the body reveals imagery portraying the face of the band’s frontman, Bill Kaulitz, as a humanoid robot (that is to say a non-human form that appears human and is often, though not necessarily, robotic to some degree). It depicts his make-up clad face interfaced with the head of a humanoid robot next to the band’s name and logo, made up from two Latin letters “T” and “H” on one another, its “T”-stroke shorter than usual, and the “H” shifted up and flipped to the side. It is usually depicted on their albums, surrounded by a broken circle. Tubes and wires protruding from apertures on the back of Bill’s head, along with his unsmiling expression, give the overall impression that this image has been the result of some kind of futuristic, and potentially unsettling, medical operation.

---

<sup>21</sup> In literary cyberpunk “gay and lesbian characters are rare [i]n a genre which lacks female characters, strong and otherwise,” (Cadora, Karen. “Feminist Cyberpunk.” Graham J. Murphy and Sherryl Vint (Eds.) *Beyond Cyberpunk*. New York: Routledge, 2010, 157-172, here 162).

<sup>22</sup> “Tokio Hotel.” *Deutsche Welle. PopXport*. Special, 28 Feb 2015, <<http://www.dw.de/programm/popxport/s-7851-9800>>; 1 Mar 2015.

<sup>23</sup> “Tokio Hotel,” *Wikipedia Deutsch*, <[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokio\\_Hotel](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokio_Hotel)>; 10 Jan 2015.

<sup>24</sup> “Tokio Hotel Humanoid.” Universal Music GmbH, CD. EU: 2009.

A humanoid robot is nothing new to European culture and musicology. For example, as early as 1737, the French inventor Jacques de Vaucanson was creating automata that brought him fame and recognition within Europe.<sup>25</sup> Other early humanoid robots can be found in the discursive field of German Romantic fiction, for example the automatic doll “Olympia” in E.T.A. Hoffmann’s 1817 short story “Der Sandmann” (‘The Sandman’) from a collection of short stories published under the title “Nachtstücke” (‘Night Pieces’) in 1817. “The Sandman” is a friendly character of German folklore and is said to throw sand into the eyes of children to help them fall asleep in the evening. However, Hoffmann’s tale shows a horrific depiction of that character since he throws sand in the eyes of children until they bleed, then carries them in a bag to the moon and feeds them to his own offspring, who peck out the children’s eyes with their beaks. The protagonist of Hoffmann’s story is the sensitive Nathanael, who feared the Sandman since childhood and identifies him with the sinister lawyer Coppelius. Coppelius frequently visited Nathanael’s father late at night to perform chemical experiments, and as a result his father is killed by an explosion. These unfortunate events haunt Nathanael for the rest of his life, and when he falls in love with Olympia she proves to be an automaton, bringing him delirium and madness. This story, which features a humanoid character in order to explore notions of mirror imaging, was extensively analyzed in Sigmund Freud’s 1919 essay “Das Unheimliche”<sup>26</sup> (‘The Uncanny’). In Freud’s reading the uncanny signifies an instance in which something is both familiar and foreign at the same time, producing an uncomfortable feeling of ambivalence when something repressed returns with the former familiar. Freud calls

---

<sup>25</sup> Schulenburg, Mathias. “Keine Spielereien.” *Deutschlandfunk*. Kalenderblatt. 21 Nov. 2007, <[http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/keine-spielereien.871.de.html?dram:article\\_id=126066](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/keine-spielereien.871.de.html?dram:article_id=126066)>; 11 Jan 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Freud, Sigmund. “Das Unheimliche”. *Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften* V (1919), 297–324, here 302f., <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34222/34222-h/34222-h.htm>>; 02 May 2017.

this “das Unheimliche” and writes: ‘...we easily recognize that it is only the moment of inadvertent repetition, which makes the otherwise harmless scary (...)’ (ibid. 311f.). However, not only is Olympia as android a central uncanny element in Hoffmann’s narrative. Another striking instance that produces an atmosphere of uncanniness evoked by the story is, according to Freud, the idea of being robbed of one’s eyes (ibid.): the anxiety of being blinded can psychoanalytically be read as castration anxiety, i.e., the fear of losing one’s power. This raises the question as to what is the relation between the uncanny and cyberpunk-pop music of Tokio Hotel.

### “Automatic.” The lyrics

“Automatisch” was the first single from the album “Humanoid.” Unlike in other songs of the album like “Dogs Unleashed,” by auto-tuning the lead singer’s and the background singers’ voices, the vocal distortion seems to produce a robotic identity amidst the straightforward musical arrangement and a strong beat.<sup>27</sup> The German word “automatisch” can be translated in English inter alia as “automatic, automated, machine-aided, self-acting”<sup>28</sup> and seems to be a very ambivalent term located between promise and anxiety. It promises action and production that does not require intentional help, but also causes fear that something or someone is running without any form of control. It can be used as adverb or adjective, and stems from the Ancient Greek term *autómaton*, which refers to “self-moving,” “moving of oneself,” “self-acting,” “spontaneous.”<sup>29</sup> So, on one hand, “automatisch” describes either technical equipment with an automation or a mechanical process that is self-regulation during the run; on the other hand, “automatisch” signifies the form of a fixed reaction that requires no

---

<sup>27</sup> This article has its emphasis on the visual images; a more detailed analysis of the music and the lyrics has to be left to a future examination.

<sup>28</sup> “automatisch,” *dict.cc. Deutsch-Englisch-Wörterbuch*, <<http://www.dict.cc/deutsch-englisch/automatisch.html>>; 9 Jul 2017.

<sup>29</sup> This stems from Greek *autós* (‘self, myself’) and *mémaa* (‘to wish eagerly, strive, yearn, desire’); “automatic,” *Wiktionary English*, <<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/automatic>>; 9 Jul 2017.

intervention, or it means “compulsory,” or “spontaneously,”<sup>30</sup> and can be ascribed to humans.

What lays beyond the song’s designation? Due to the current media practices, we find guitarist Tom Kaulitz’s answer to the question “What does ‘automatic’ mean to you?” in a “Making of” video of Tokio Hotel, where he said that the band usually get weird looks when mentioning the title “Automatic.”<sup>31</sup> He formulated, that the profundity of the song is that the word “automatic” in German and English is often used to give explanations. Tom gave the example of the children’s way of learning something which can be considered a kind of automation that has a positive connotation (ibid.); this kind of learning appears easier for children compared to the process of learning in grown-ups. He concluded that “the only time when [the term ‘automatic’] is not positive is when there is automation in a relationship or in love, then you have a problem. And that’s what this song is about” (ibid.). According to Tom, the term “automatisch” can be split into a positive and a negative connotation. However, apart from this interpretation of a (non)functioning human-to-human relationship there is much more to the song “Automatisch,” as we will see.

In order to find meaning on the symbolic level of language, the interesting lyrics of the German version will be subjected to a close reading since they differ strikingly from the simplified English version, and set the boundaries between binary oppositions like human/nonhuman, conscious/unconscious, presence/absence, and Other/other (of the self) in motion. The song sounds rocking, and its exiting lyrics unfold:

---

<sup>30</sup> “automatisch,” *Duden online*. Rechtschreibung, <<http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/automatisch>>; 9 Jul 2017

<sup>31</sup> “Tokio Hotel. Making of Automatic.” Official music video part 3, 12.11.2009, *Youtube*, <<http://youtu.be/OKPHfo1Ltcw>>, 26 Feb. 2015; English translation of parts of the interview here and in the following by the author, marked by single quotation marks.

“So automatisch, du bist wie ‘ne Maschine.  
Dein Herz schlägt nicht für mich.  
So automatisch berühr’n mich deine Hände.  
Ich spür alles, nur nicht dich.  
So automatisch, deine Stimme – elektrisch.  
Wo bist du, wenn sie spricht?  
So automatisch, wie du sagst: ‘Ich bin dir wichtig.’  
Wer programmiert dich?

Refrain: Wenn du lachst, lachst du nicht.  
Wenn du weinst, weinst du nicht.  
Wenn du fühlst, fühlst du nichts,  
Weil du ohne Liebe bist.  
Wie automatisch renn’ ich durch alle Straßen  
Und keine führt zu dir.  
Wie automatisch folgen mir deine Schatten  
Und greifen kalt nach mir.  
Du bist wie ferngesteuert, statisch und mechanisch  
So automatisch.

Refrain: ...  
(Du bist) automatisch. Nur automatisch.  
Automatisch. So automatisch.  
Dein Blick – so leer, ich kann nicht mehr.  
Alles an dir – wie einstudiert.  
Du stehst vor mir und warst nie wirklich hier.”

At the beginning of the song, the speaking “I” is talking to someone (s)he calls “Du”, or “you,” and accuses him/her to be automatic. The first stanza could be translated in English as “So automatic, you’re like an engine. /Your heart doesn’t beat for me. /Your hands are touching me so automatically. /I feel anything, just not you.” So who is this “Du”? The lyrics compare the Other to a machine. However, it is just a comparison and the “I” does not say the other person is actually a machine. When it says “Your heart doesn’t beat for me” it seems to be a well-known and often heard

idiom that means the Other is not in love with the speaking “I.” When the “I” continues to complain about the missing sensation on the skin because of the automatic way the Other is touching the speaking “I,” we are reminded of an old couple that have gotten so used to each other that they already don’t feel each other’s touch: it became an automation. Human automatism is an unplanned process that is located at the boundary between conscious and unconscious processes. They may occur at the level of individual or collective actions. Still, although this action is neither conscious nor unconscious the comparison of the described “you” to a machine seems to be negatively connoted. It is also not clear if the touching can be read as an intentional manipulation by the addressed Other since the speaking “I” was not convinced and implies that the Other is not in love with him/her.

The following two lines could be translated as “So automatic, your voice – [is] electric./Where are you, when it speaks?” The fact that the Other’s voice appears almost automatically to the “I” while asking about the other person’s whereabouts at the time when (s)he is speaking could be read as the Other being unaware of speaking while speaking, which means that (s)he is talking unconsciously or is absent minded. But when the “I” accuses the Other of having an electrical voice,<sup>32</sup> this points to the Other using a machine to speak, which possibly could be an implanted electronic speech help following a throat operation to compensate for the removed vocal chords. Connected to a machine, this means the Other would be a hybrid. The next sentence could be translated as “So automatically, how you say: ‘I’m important for you’,” and may signify that the Other is absent minded and often uses the same sentences while talking to the speaking “I.” This points to a general unimaginativeness in the conversation with a well-known beloved person. The sentence which says “Who programs you?”

---

<sup>32</sup> After first listening to the song “Automatisch” on the radio, the ambiguity of the “Du” in the lyrics gave the author the idea for this inquiry.

grammatically inscribes the counterpart as a machine.<sup>33</sup> (Looking back, in this view the second verse “Your heart doesn’t beat for me” acquires a different meaning, i.e., the absence of a human heart.) Or secondly, if read rhetorically it indicates that (s)he is not a machine but just like it. The first reading puts the understanding of the counterpart as a human being into question while the second reading still accepts a human being as counterpart of the speaking “I.” Since both readings are possible the lyrics stay ambiguous.

The refrain could be translated as “When you laugh, you don’t laugh./When you cry, you don’t cry./When you feel, you don’t feel anything/Because you are without love.” Interestingly, the first three lines of the refrain all use a paradoxical phrase that leads to a seemingly self-contradictory conclusion. They describe that the counterpart does not laugh when (s)he laughs. This could be read as a situation in which (s)he does not feel like it but is laughing anyway. The second line of the refrain says that the counterpart does not cry when (s)he cries. This could be read as a situation in which (s)he does not feel sad but – willingly or unwillingly – still cries, perhaps in order to enforce his/her will onto the speaking “I.” Also, the refrain says that the counterpart does not feel when (s)he feels. This seems to be an aporia because the sentence is self-contradictory, and the speaking “I” cannot possibly know what another person feels. The speaking “I” therefore appears overbearing and dominant. However, the final line of the refrain gives a rational explanation for the paradoxes and states that the counterpart is “without love.” So, the ambiguous refrain could be describing either a human being or a nonhuman entity that is without inner feelings and just pretends to get what (s)he wants. Until now, the comparison to a machine-like being that can be programmed seemed just rhetorical emphasis, but, when looking back to the line “Who

---

<sup>33</sup> Therefore from now on, we cannot refer to the “you” (“Du”) as “the big Other” anymore which would signify someone being different from the self (e.g., in Lacanian psychoanalysis another human being).

programmed you?”, we start to doubt the interpretation that the counterpart is a human being. The “I” may actually speak to a nonhuman being.

The next stanza gives a new twist and could be translated as “Like automatically/I run through all the streets/and none [of them] guides me to you./Like automatically/Your shadows follow me/And coldly reach for me./You are like remote controlled, static and mechanical/So automatic.” In this stanza the speaking “I” describes itself as running through many streets without finding its counterpart, the “Du.” However, in the first line the “I” compares its own movement to an automation which leads us again to question the status of the “I”: is it a human or an automaton? Since the “I” is just “like automatically” instead of “automatically”, it should be human. Strangely enough, while trying to follow the counterpart, the speaking “I” is being followed and attributes its chaser, scary shadows, in a plural form to the counterpart,<sup>34</sup> while at the same time comparing the chase to automation and linking the grasping movements of the shadows to a coldness (“greifen kalt”). So the other being could be a controlled android that looks like a human from the outside but is cold and consists of metal. But why it is not the counterpart but only its eerie shadows that reach for the “I”? Are there only shadows in the streets without the counterpart? Who could possibly grasp with shadows and emit a coldness? Since ghosts are considered to be cold, and a human being would just have a single shadow, it could be something ghostly. But in case there is more than one light on the street, the text still could figuratively describe a human being that has an emotional coldness and tries to claw at the running “I.” Also, a shadow should usually be located directly behind the one who causes it, which leads us to the uncanny motif of the shadows as doppelganger. A doppelganger looks identical to a

---

<sup>34</sup> The song “Humanoid,” whose harder beat and metallic guitars show the impact of nu metal bands like Limp Bizkit, speaks in reversion of an ‘I’ that is running behind ‘the shadow’ (“Ich lauf dem Schatten hinterher,” see “Humanoid” in “Tokio Hotel. Best of. German version.” Universal Music GmbH, CD. EU: 2010.

living person, and the lyrics indicate that, instead of a twin, it would be a ghostlike apparition. The familiarity of the shadows with the living person's image – which was formerly repressed – comes up again, unknown and not recognizable, and frightening uncanniness arises: a fear of the unseen in the sphere between life and dead. Still, the lyrics stay equivocal. The stanza concludes with a statement that compares the counterpart to a machine since only machines can be remote controlled and mechanical.

The second time, at the end of the ambiguous self-contradictory refrain, more lines are added (see above) that could be translated as “(You are) automatic. Only automatic. /Automatic. So automatic. /Your look – so empty, I can't go on any longer. /Everything about you – like well-rehearsed. /You stand in front of me and were never really here.” Following the repetition of the description of paradoxical situations (i.e., to laugh, cry, and feel without actually doing it) the speaking “I” turns to a characterization of the absent look of the counterpart, leading to his/her conclusion that the “I” can't carry on anymore. To the speaking “I” everything about the counterpart seems “well-rehearsed” instead of supposedly authentically produced. The last line describes that the “you” (“Du”) is standing in front of the “I” and at the same time, it was paradoxically not there. This can be read as a situation of a break-up, presumably suggesting that the “I” cannot continue the relation because the other human/nonhuman being is apparently always absent minded. The subsequent refrain of the song finally grammatically states three times that the counterpart is not only like it but actually is “automatic.” Can we identify the counterpart as a human, a ghost, or a humanoid robot? A ghost could not be remote controlled, so the “Du” does not describe a ghost and the shadows were not produced by a ghost. It is possible that the speaking “I” is a human that talks to a humanoid calling it “automatic.” (S)he/It may also be an illusion of the mind since the lyrics claim at the end that the counterpart “were never really here.” Apart from an absent minding “you,” this also can indicate the “I” may talk to his/her mirror image

and accuse oneself of being (like) a machine. Therefore, the shadows that follow would be his/her own and could originate from the speaking “I.” In this case the speaking “I” would be alone and schizophrenically talking to him/her/itself. The ghostly “you” is neither present nor absent. While the issue of the Other/other remains opaque due to the ambiguities in the song text, the fascinating lyrics of “Automatisch” demonstrate that the differences between human being and humanoid coincide, and the border lines between human being and humanoid become more and more blurred.

### **Auto driving, automatically. The video**

The 2009 video for the song “Automatisch”<sup>35</sup> fosters an atmosphere lying somewhere between hopeful road movie and horror. The intro shows a straight desert road in daylight, nestled between hills, where four dust covered cars drive through an arid, dystopic landscape, immediately providing a reference to the genre of “cyberpunk.” The location could be anywhere<sup>36</sup> because the video does not show any street signs. Therefore, the introduction refers to possible new (space) explorations. There are no clues as to whether the video takes place in the future or the past as the cars alternately drive on both sides of the sandy asphalt without any other car in sight. It looks as though the cars are racing as they take turns to overtake one another.

After a time, the cars drive off-road into the remote desert, their colors faded by the dust. Through the showing of ease with which this racing in the open landscape takes place, the video exhibits a certain feeling, similar to a commercial: rather than stressing a conscious steering of the wheel with cognitive abilities it simply captures the joy of young people racing with friends. The focus on the perception of driving in

<sup>35</sup> “Tokio Hotel. Automatic.” *YouTube*, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhllqBqRtuw>>, 5 Jul 2017.

<sup>36</sup> It is actually in South Africa, c.f. “Tokio Hotel. Making of ‘Automatic’ in South Africa,” 26th August 2009, Tokio Hotel Buzzworthy Video, <<http://youtu.be/SXAdmGxc2hc>>, 28 Feb 2015.

a certain state of distraction reminds us of Walter Benjamin’s notion of “Zerstreuung,”<sup>37</sup> which describes a state between consciousness and unconsciousness, respectively a concentration on emptiness and vacuity. This kind of driving diverts the attention from frustration and subordination of the youth as subaltern group, and holds a promise of new exciting experiences and explorations of the unknown. With countless references to other car videos,<sup>38</sup> the video images let the fans<sup>39</sup> imagine a space of independence, relaxed and without parental control, far away from the confines of regulated society. In this video the song’s topic “automation” can be connected not only to the technique with which an automobile (in German “Auto”) can be moved, but also to the tranquility of automatically driving as something between consciousness and unconsciousness, a form of behavioral automation instead of concentration.

With its emphasis on operating machines the video opens up a certain view of the relation between man and machine. The scenes described so far, which allude to car advertising, could be considered a commercial interpretation of male gendered radical freedom that stays outside of society, were it not for the way that the band’s iconic lead singer is portrayed in the video. After just five seconds of the video, the image of Bill Kaulitz is shown in some short close-up cuts behind one of the steering wheels. The camera’s focus on this charismatic singer allows him to stand out from the pack and stresses the foreignness of his ambiguous sexual identity. His perpetually flowing hair falls freely and symbolizes a certain non-conformist aspect: “to let one’s hair down”

---

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin, Walter. *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter der technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*. Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1977. 136-169, here 165f.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., advertisement videos in a desert setting like “Rammstein. Mercedes.” *Youtube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcWKGy5HXUc>> as well as music videos like “The Cardigans. My Favourite Game.” *Youtube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsMUQK4jdsQ>>, both 28 May 2017.

<sup>39</sup> For an examination of the predominately teenage female fans and ‘a female atmosphere’ (Bader, Bianka. “Bill ist halt nicht so hundertprozentig dieser Hardcore Typ”. *Eine empirische Untersuchung zu Männlichkeitsinszenierungen der Pop-Gruppe “Tokio-Hotel” und deren Rezeption durch Fans*. Flensburg, Flensburg Univ. Press, 2008, 75) see *ibid.* 68-158.

means “to allow yourself to behave much more freely than usual and enjoy yourself.”<sup>40</sup> The movement of his loose hair signifies broader themes of freedom, and is later visually repeated in the video by other band members.

The video “Automatisch” is not in continuous chronological order but moves back and forth in time, so the fluctuation of light and shadows becomes a very important guiding element to produce a narrative. We see the band members getting out of their cars in the desert, as the sky darkens and shortly after the next cuts (0:16, 0:34 ff.) show a mysterious, back-lit, giant metallic spiral, visible in the uncanny darkness, which all band members walk towards. Illuminated by light, the giant spiral alludes on one hand to the brightness of incandescent filaments in light bulbs with a high density of light output, and on the other hand to the double helix of the human genome in molecular biology. In the video the spiral is paradoxically fixed in a material commonly used for technical devices. This could be read as a symbol that interlinks the living material of life with the dead material of technical appliances, and as a result emits light energy: a seemingly magical situation is created. The brightly lit spiral symbolically problematizes the difference between dead matter and living organism, and what was thought of as technology and nature.

Between shots of the band playing on a stage surrounded by discarded mechanical objects, two humanoid robots, with the rounded body contours of a cartoon style, begin to move eerily all by themselves amidst a dark metal refuse site near the stage. It is not clear if it is a reaction to Tokio Hotel’s music, but, despite being apparently thrown out as scrap, the humanoid robots still seem capable of functioning. This is a clue that the video takes place in the future since it is unlikely anyone would throw away valuable robots now. Astonishingly, the humanoid robots seem to be gendered. When the first

---

<sup>40</sup> “let your hair down”, *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*, <<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/let-your-hair-down>>; 01 Mar 2015.

humanoid robot with a more narrow-waisted body shape, suggesting female gender, begins to rise from the foggy ground, she emits a yellow light in the form of a strange sign in the area where a human body would have a face. The second, silver colored humanoid robot lying on the ground starts to move as well and raises its head, which also has the same mysterious “face,” although it is a different color (a blue-white light). This strange sign will appear familiar to Tokio Hotel fans as it seems similar to the band logo, turned on its head. With particular context to the band’s name,<sup>41</sup> the logo is reminiscent of an exotic, Asian written character, for example a Japanese or Chinese one. This emblem signifies both something foreign and the band itself. Since the logo stands for the band and literally gives a face to the humanoid robots, it is clear to see that it forms a relation between the band and the robots. It seems as if only in the eerie dark, that the humanoid robots are able to come to life through the music. In front of the stage the more masculine, Y-shaped second humanoid robot looks around. Seemingly at first, his face changes to red, and he feels threatened by the other humanoid robot as he transforms his left arm to become a weapon. By transcending robotics, the apparent self-determination of this displaced humanoid robot shows an ambivalent structure that creates an uncertainty and produces an uncanniness. Seemingly as a reaction to the intimidation, the other humanoid robot also changes her face light to red and raises her hand. Suddenly, the “face” of the bigger one becomes blue-white again, he transforms his weaponry back to an arm shape and the two robots approach each other.

After two minutes of the video (at 2:15), the humanoid robot with male features puts out his three-fingered hand, which is taken by the other. As they appear engendered

---

<sup>41</sup> About the band’s mysterious name, see Leipelt-Tsai, Monika. “Tokio Hotel. Translating German Pop Culture.” *Guang Yi. Lingual, Literary, and Cultural Translation*. Translation Center, College of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Chengchi University, No. 3, Taipei, Jan. 2010. 101-128, here 104.

and act like social beings, we shall call them “humanoids” instead of “humanoid robots” from now on. According to the aesthetic hypothesis of the “Uncanny Valley”, a term from robotics and digital animation, artificially created characters may have a strange, creepy, and threatening effect, depending on how much human-like they seem. Following Masahiro Mori,<sup>42</sup> the human response to a human-like robot abruptly shifts from empathy to aversion as it approaches (but fails to attain) a lifelike appearance. This means, that while a likeness in the artificial counterpart triggers mirroring in the humans, more “realism” can lead to less positive reactions. Applying Mori’s concept to this subject, the humanoids in the Tokio Hotel video seem neither uncanny nor menacing since they have a rather rounded body shape that follows the roundness pattern of childlike characteristics, though they remain far from approaching anything particularly human-like in terms of their features.

Next the video shows all band members at dawn leaving the location while the two humanoids slowly turn their heads towards each other. When they almost kiss, the female gendered humanoid suddenly turns her head away as if she were too shy: although it is usually said that there could be no eroticism in robots,<sup>43</sup> with this coy movement arises a first erotic step.<sup>44</sup> In this way, the line between machine and human starts to oscillate.

At the end of the video, the humanoids stand side by side under a fast moving blanket of clouds and stare into a rising light, presumably at the sun that is not yet visible. The rising light denotes a change in time, i.e., the beginning of a new day, and

---

<sup>42</sup> Mori, Masahiro. “The Uncanny Valley.” (1970) *Robotics & Automation Magazine*, IEEE, June 2012, 19 (2), 98–100, <<http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/articleDetails.jsp?arnumber=6213238>>; 9 Jan 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Vedder, Ulrike. “Mit schiefem Mund auch ‘Heimat’ ” - Heimat und Nation in Libuše Moníková’s Texten. *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und Literatur*. 89.4, 1997. 477-488, here 486.

<sup>44</sup> The music video “All is Full of Love” by Björk proves that lesbian eroticism can be connected to humanoid robots, too (“Björk - All is Full of Love” (Official Music Video) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjI2J2SQ528>>; 6 Mar 2015.).

thus symbolizes a time period to come that is brighter than the current one. It is not shown what the future will bring. Will the humanoids stay in the lonely desert and be forgotten, or start a new life like the sunrise promises? As the song ends with a high guitar tone, the final images show Bill at the end of his performance: the portrayal of his androgynous beauty is gradually outshone by a glaring spotlight that covers him and turns the screen into a blinding white light (at 3:11). At first glance, this blinding by the light can be associated with the uncanny and the ghostly; when read with Freud, the fear of being blinded is also a phantasized threat of castration, i.e., the fear of losing one's power, that leads to the fear of the uncanny as the (un)familiar and unseen.<sup>45</sup> Since the movement of the clouds in Tokio Hotel's video indicates a relief of the dark surrounding and limiting horizon, the blinding light at the end somewhat repeats the sunrise's revelation: an indication of the opening of the clouds that breaks way for unforeseen possibilities in a transformed, transhumanist world. Instead of fearing the loss of one's power, it points to new pleasures to come as the reverse side of an uncanny connection to technology.

So what relation is displayed between the band and the humanoids in the music video? The band in the video is made up of human beings who most of the time use machines: they move around by using a mechanical automated means of transportation. All human beings in the video use and operate electr(on)ically amplified musical instruments and a microphone respectively, which are all technical instruments to enhance the sound and their abilities to perform. It turns out that, like Billy Idol, overall they already show a connectedness to instruments and machines. As the title

---

<sup>45</sup> In the context of the popular music discourse this blinding light seems to hint as well at the 1973 pop song "Blinded by the light" by Bruce Springsteen ("Bruce Springsteen - Blinded by the Light", <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uozMTmEjxHc>>; 5 Jul 2017. This song became especially famous through Manfred Mann's Earth Band 1976 version). The final verses of "Blinded by the light" read "Mama always told me not to look into the sights of the sun./Oh, but Mama, that's where the fun is." These verses suggest on the symbolic level (by not obeying the rules of the parents) a revolt against the authoritarian structures in patriarchal societies.

“Humanoid” promised, we have found a splitting into a place of the in-between, for the video does not essentialistically separate the human body from technology. Neither living nor dead, the humanoids are not only gendered but even display emotions in the form of Romantic feelings. This suggests that what formerly had been scrap metal is now able to show sentiment, something that formerly only belonged to a human personality. Ironically the humanoids express more feelings than the human beings in the video.<sup>46</sup> Because the humanoids mirror human beings emotionally, not only physically, they seem to be a parody. We may say that in this regard the image of the humanoids in the Tokio Hotel video can be linked with the theorist Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of “mimicry” from his book *The Location of Culture*:

“mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence”.<sup>47</sup>

When we read this ambivalence of the humanoid, we actually can recognize him/her/it as a re-formed Other, a subaltern subject/object, shaped in metal but with human sentiment, i.e., “a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.” In this travesty the humanoids seem only visually distinguishable from humans. The

---

<sup>46</sup> Looking again at the video of “Automatisch,” we recognize now that the sign in the humanoids’ faces looks very similar to the Chinese character “主” (zhǔ) written upside down. The character “主人” can, amongst other meanings, be translated as “master,” “owner,” “host” and “lord.” (“主人,” *Bab.la dictionary Chinese English*, <<http://en.bab.la/dictionary/chinese-english/%E4%B8%BB%E4%BA%BA>>; 2 Mar 2015). Since the Chinese character for being the master on the humanoids’ faces has been turned upside down as though paradoxically indicating a change of status, this could be read as a subversion of its former meaning. It may hint at Tokio Hotel’s influence and effects on the subaltern youth: the structure of the Hegelian dialectic of the master and the slave may successively be reversed (Hegel clarified that domination and servitude are interdependent (cf. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. (1807) Stuttgart, Reclam: 1996, < <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/phanomenologie-des-geistes-1656/1>>; 7 Mar 2015). This ambivalent imagery brings to thought an articulation of protest against the current power and rules in society, a revolutionary vision for the subaltern youth which changes their former perspective. The overturned foreign element “主” seems to be a pun that makes fun of the human condition: the overturning of the Chinese sign for master may also be an allusion to the future overthrowing of the hegemonic human beings as master of all things.

<sup>47</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. (1994) With a preface by the author. New York: Routledge, 2004, 122.

video uses “mimicry” as a strategy of subversion in a way that uncannily overturns the hierarchy of humans. This suggests that there may be a future in which humanoids cannot be distinguished anymore from humans based on their emotional response. In context to the location of the foreign element, the humanoids, the boundaries between human and machine are breached and could be read as symbolic resistance by machines, evoking a change in hierarchy in the future: the humanoids may change and turn out to be menacing to today’s authorities, another rebellion of punk and trash but this time in cyber.

### **Enhanced constructedness of the stage image: The live performance**

At the beginning of Tokio Hotel’s 2010 live performance, before Bill Kaulitz begins the song “Dogs Unleashed,” he comes onto the stage via a mechanical floor elevator, sitting on a Harley-Davidson motorbike.<sup>48</sup> The visual effects include a repetition of the ‘scheme of childlike characteristics’ (cf. Leipelt-Tsai 2010 108) in Bill’s big round sunglasses and in two big round head lights on the front of the oversized motorbike that almost resemble big eyes and bring the machine somewhat closer to an emotional expression, just like the prototype robot in the Sci-fi film *Short Circuit* (1986). Much like in the video of “Automatisch,” his surrounding accentuates automatization and mobility with machines.

---

<sup>48</sup> “Tokio Hotel - Dogs unleashed (live)”, Welcome to Humanoid City Tour in Esch/Luxemburg 22.02.2010 Rockhal (HD), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEIIVIZFGvE>>; 7 Mar 2015.



Bill Kaulitz 2010 in the Hallenstadion, Switzerland. This photo was kindly provided for this essay by its author and copyright owner, Pascal Parvex, <http://www.parvexfilm.com>.

The fragile looking Bill wears a black, gleaming stage costume that reminds us of an exoskeleton, i.e., an external skeleton that supports and protects the body. Over each shoulder he wears three light strings in black tubes covered with small points of blue-white LED light that resemble a powered spinal cord from afar. With the “exoskeleton” however also returns the image of the skeleton as a medieval portrayal of death, now as protection and deterrence that unfold almost a seductive effect. His skin-like costume bears different technical parts on the front and back, including something that alludes to a black version of the arc reactor from one of the armored suits worn by Marvel Comics’ Iron Man, subverting or mocking that superhero as if a child is jokingly playing at “transforming into a machine” and pretending to be a “locomotive.” Another reading of his style could be a semblance to a kind of technical dark angel with bright angel’s wings: Bill wears black gloves, so we cannot see any of his human skin except for his partially covered face. Moreover, compared to the video that we have just analyzed, his stage image has gone through a complete metamorphosis: while Bill still looks pale and retains some of his androgynous look, his hairstyle has completely changed. Instead of the long flowing hair in an iconology of female beauty, it is now undercut and becomes reminiscent of a punk hairstyle since both sides of his head have very short hair. His in-ear-monitor is apparently made visible to contribute to the image construction of a more

mechanized look, producing the image of a body between human and machine. Compared to 2008, when Bianka Bader wrote “Bill is not situated in the system of hegemonic masculinity with his symbolic female insignia” (Bader 129), in 2010, his stage image’s constructedness has changed to become even more ambiguous. With its technological insignia to fit the (post)modern age of the “cyber,” Bill’s stage persona has further converted to the style of cyberpunk.

At the beginning of the live performance of the song “Automatic”<sup>49</sup> the focus is on the lead singer who has taken off his sunglasses to allow more emphasis on emotions using his dark shadowed eyes. Although all band members are shown from time to time, Bill is constantly illuminated because of his conspicuous costume, lit with three strings of flashing blue and white LEDs. As always, his stage image seems playful and serious at the same time, and not a travesty. In addition to the colorful light show and a large monitor that simultaneously shows clips of the performance and the humanoids (at 2:03) from the music video, three rows of blue-white spotlights above the stage move from the right and the left, thereby optically repeating the featured light motif of Bill’s stage image, i.e., the threefold blue-white light strings. The many cords with LED light working in unison with his peculiar costume stress hybridity and hints to a new kind of ‘technology-body-relationship’ (Leibetseder 229) that puts the boundaries between human and machine into motion.

What is new in Bill’s image of cyberpunk, compared to historic predecessors in the field of pop music? While with Kraftwerk’s electronic music the human being vanishes behind the humanoid robots, in punk the unique Billy Idol dealt with the topic of human and machine differently. Idol’s cyborg performance demonstrated gestures of intimidation while acting out a provocative, dominant masculine gendered role; he was

---

<sup>49</sup> “Humanoid City Live DVD – Automatic,” <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U2zY43z3sM>>, 21 July 2014.

not afraid to show crudity and ugliness, thereby revealing the expected uncanniness of a cyborg who stands between man and machine and is torn inwards and outwards. Bill Kaulitz' cyborgian stage persona on the other hand in his hybrid intermediate position seems not threatening at all but actually extremely polite, friendly and most importantly it emphasizes beauty without the inscription of masculinist power. Also, in a comparison to David Bowie's inspiring 1972 glam rock image of "Ziggy Stardust", Bill's stage image can be described as less theatrical, less sexually autonomous, and more playful (Leipelt-Tsai 2010 118f.). According to Karin Kross, David Bowie also had an impact in pop music history as a cyberpunk when his 1980 New Wave album "Scary Monsters" was released. Although the image of the androgynous pale Bowie in a delicate Pierrot costume is on his record cover, Kross refers to Bowie's respective music video as 'cyberpunk:'

“Which at first glance couldn't be any less science-fictional or cyberpunk, but look at it through the filter provided by the haunting, stark video for “Ashes to Ashes,” where it manages to suggest something both nostalgic and alien — prefiguring (...) J.F. Sebastian's workshop in Blade Runner. In that video (...), interspersed with Pierrot-Bowie and his sacerdotal Blitz Kids attendants, are flashes of Bowie in a padded cell, trapped in a space suit in an exploding 1950s kitchen, and suspended in an Alien-like chamber among tentacled tubing. A hallucinatory 1980 science-fiction moment if there ever was one.”<sup>50</sup>

In connection with visions of space aliens, an enormous isolation cell, and nostalgic pieces of memory of a mother, the sexually ambiguous imagery of Bowie's strange, pale-faced, clownish stage persona in this video produced an intended feeling of foreignness and uncanniness that the title of Bowie's album “Scary Monsters” already indicates. While in punk the body is a symbol of opposition and foremost a

---

<sup>50</sup> Kross, Karin L. “Cyberpunk Bowie, New Wave Bowie: A look at Scary Monsters.” *TOR Com* the imprint, Bowie week, 11. Jan. 2012, <<http://www.tor.com.blogs/2012/01/bowie-week-scary-monsters>>; 6. Aug. 2014.

statement of rebellion against the established powers, Bowie's 1980's image of Pierrot plays with the naive character of the Commedia dell'Arte figure. Bowie's narration in the "Ashes to Ashes" video recalls introspective nightmares from the perspective of the character "Major Tom" that Bowie created in his 1969 album ironically called "Space Oddity" (mocking Kubrick's film title *A Space Odyssey*) and can be read as a parody. Whereas Bowie plays a rather melancholic and at the same time ironic role as clown in cyberpunk, partially "tongue-in-cheek," the punky yet flamboyantly decorated Bill Kaulitz wants to be taken seriously. Unlike on the cover of the Audio CD of "Humanoid", his live stage imagery in the artificial light does not remind us of a human or a robot, he rather shows the feature of a cyborg-like creature characterized by the strange luminous spinal column.

When we compare the androgynous appearance of singer Bill in the aesthetics of gender sameness in the 2009 video of "Automatisch" with his playful transhumanist stage image of 2010 in the live performance, Bill in his enigmatic technical cyber outfit seems to show a being that is not only neither man nor woman but is also neither man nor machine. His/Her/Its non-decipherable body frame makes us question our view of gender as a dichotomy, and touches the border between man and machine. In 2010, his image does not only play with gender concepts but shows the constructedness of his stage persona even more directly than before, indicating a symbolic resistance not alone to gender identity but a resistance to human representation. Even if there is a certain strangeness evoked by his costume, equipped with strings in tubes that could be linked to medicine, the overall visual presence of Bill does not show the expected uncanniness of a "typical" cyborg (i.e. like Billy Idol's). Bill Kaulitz' presence on the stage shows no robotic movement whatsoever, something that could be expected if we think of Kraftwerk from the 1970s/1980s. Unlike Kraftwerk's robots, his face emphasizes emotion, and he does not jolt and shrug but dances smoothly and elegantly. He has the

ordinary demeanor of a pop-rock singer and his movements during the live performance do not differ significantly from performances of other pop singers. Still, they seem more graceful, not sexualized, and he displays a charming charisma. Therefore, Bill's image should not be considered uncanny but cute. In addition, when he moves, playfully skipping over the stage, this also relates to the characteristics of a child, appeals to our protective instincts, and translates his outer cyborgian aesthetics to a rather humanlike appearance. This suggests that his stage image does not enter the "Uncanny Valley," especially since currently the notions of ideal beauty are affected by plastic surgery as well as computer processed and photo-shopped images that start to open and lead the boundaries of beauty to a direction of a stronger artificiality in aesthetics.

#### **Future possibilities: A cyborgian identity**

The imagery shown by Tokio Hotel in their music video and stage image show traces of a new identity politics especially for the female and subaltern youth which can be interlinked with Donna J. Haraway's concept of the cyborg from her essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs. Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's." As Haraway puts it:

"A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. ... The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. ... the boundaries between science fiction and social struggle is an optical illusion." (Haraway, 324)

According to Haraway, technology is not antithetical to human organisms but deeply involved with humanity. In her ironic essay she argues that the border of human and machine was already breached in war and in medicine (cf. *ibid.* 326f.). According to Haraway, a cyborg forms and destroys machines, identities, categories, relationships,

and distances, and replaces stories of racist male-dominant capitalism, progress, and the appropriation of nature as resource for culture. She suggests that a cyborg identity is a “potent subjectivity synthesized from fusions of outsider identities” (ibid. 343), and confronts the domination of “race,” “gender,” “sexuality,” and “class” (cf. ibid. 331). As a hybrid that has a “dissembled and reassembled post-modern collective and personal self” the cyborg is seen by Haraway neither as structured in dualisms nor is it gendered at all, loses any original unity, and does not dream of masculinist reproduction (cf. ibid. 325, 327) nor women’s activity as mothers or labor in the household. In the movement from an industrial society to a polymorphous information society, the symbolic system of the family breaks up at the same time as people become connected in multiple and complex ways. As a cyborg is already uncoupled from organic reproduction, following Haraway, this creature lives in a post-gendered world and offers a new kind of community based on affinity instead of unity. It is not based on a fixed term but on the “understanding”<sup>51</sup> of differences. Therefore, imagination and reality will construct a joined center with monstrous identities of possible historical transformations. In order to construct a new kind of so-called feminist politics, Haraway’s concept of the non-gendered cyborg maps a future in which “we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism” (ibid. 325).

The theoretical concept of Haraway’s cyborg helps to establish a link between technology, body, and (not an effeminateness but) an “e-femininity” in the style of Tokio Hotel’s 2010 live performance, where the playful Bill Kaulitz seems not structured in dualisms at all. His stage image subverts the gendering of so-called Western cultures into male and female and destroys fixed identities and categories, which can be seen as a parallel operation to Haraway’s cyborg. Despite his dissembled

---

<sup>51</sup> The question of understanding cannot be considered here.

and reassembled (post)modern costume, which corresponds well to Haraway's concept, Bill's stage persona demonstrates a very personal style, e.g., the aesthetics of cuteness as affective register and his facial expressions as emotive power of his image. In Tokio Hotel's 2010 live stage performance, the usual image of male-dominant rock music bands is, for the most part, exchanged, leaving only the drummer as a model for a one-sided gender. Whereas other music groups usually show some sort of unity in style, their band members appear more as a hybrid collective that has lost any original unity, just like Haraway's concept of the cyborg. Furthermore, with Stuart Hall we can say that German cyberpunk-pop music culture, just like any popular culture "is a contradictory space. It is a sight of strategic contestation."<sup>52</sup> Instead of any closure, the cyborgian image of Bill, again, shows an openness to the future without end or death, just no longer within the aesthetics of sameness as in the 2009 video (or in the former image of a "bishōnen"<sup>53</sup> in manga, which as well could be linked to cosplay, and the fashion of Japanese *visual kei*<sup>54</sup>). Instead, Bill's imagery of stage persona rather has a fractal, surrealistic aesthetic built of many layers, i.e. not street but a glamorous technological look on the cutting edge of fashion, combined with his cute former "Gothic-Lolita" (ibid. 113) look. When linking the stage image of Bill as cyborgian with Haraway's "potent myth for resistance and recoupling" (Haraway 328), this imagery can be read as mode of identity building for the female youth and other subaltern. Anthropomorphism and transgender show that (post)modern art exposes the 'cultural imaginary' and visually initiates a reorientation in contemporary youth culture.

---

<sup>52</sup> Hall, Stuart. "What is this 'black' in black popular culture?" Hall, Stuart. *Critical dialogues in cultural studies*. Ed. Morely, David, and Kuan-Hsing Chen. New York: Routledge, 1996, 465-475, here 472.

<sup>53</sup> About the relation between the symbolic position of a *bishōnen* in *shōjo manga* and Bill Kaulitz's androgyn visual image see Leipelt-Tsai 2010, 109-121.

<sup>54</sup> A similar linkage could be made from the *bishōnen* image to the style of the Japanese glam rock and fashion genre *visual-kei*, in particular with its second generation that includes multi-faceted musical styles and gender ambiguity (Seibt, Oliver. "Asagi's Voice. Learning how to Desire with Japanese *Visual-kei*." Utz, Christian, Frederick Lau (Eds.) *Vocal Music and Contemporary Identities: Unlimited Voices in East Asia and the West*. New York: Routledge, 2013, 248-266, 251).

We can read the imagery of Bill Kaulitz as resistance of a symbolic nature that tries to rewrite the inscriptions of power in order to fight against “unity-through-incorporation” (ibid. 330). With the theoretical myth of Haraway’s cyborg as background we can imagine possible entities who construct revolutionary standpoints to change the future into a world where origin does not matter, and build a political form of community that works by affinity, not through blood relation.

### **Uncanniness in the “polymorphous information society”**

We have opened up the question of the (post)modern body in German cyberpunk-pop music culture to show a topic of the future to come in a transgressive world from a German perspective, i.e., a new form of subversive symbolic resistance for the identity building of the youth. To explore a contemporary subculture is not only an important topic for the German cultural studies, but also an interesting example for other cultures in general because “popular culture has historically become the dominant form of global culture” (Hall 472). We unfolded different ambiguous figurations of the music group Tokio Hotel of the song “Automatisch” in the lyrics of the song “Automatisch,” in one of their videos and in their live performance, and addressed the problem of uncanniness. Tokyo Hotel’s imagery appears as a complex artistic program that touches traditional correlations of meaning and opens up new spaces.

Tokio Hotel’s visual art from 2009/2010 centers on the interface between human and machine. In their lyrics and imagery these both are intertwined, but in each case to a different degree. Also, in each cultural text of “Automatisch” the motif of the uncanny is repeated in a different variation. We exemplarily traced the paradoxical in the German lyrics of “Automatisch,” and discussed the ambiguity and splitting of the subject that stays equivocal and makes way to a possible uncanniness not only of the Other but also of the self as other, because it cannot be read as an opposition to an automaton and its

borders to the addressed “you” – which is neither present nor absent – stay ambiguous. The lyrics seem to play with the German language, especially in connection with the car race in the video. At first glance, the video of “Automatisch” seemed to display the band as antithesis of the automata, yet, during the video it became clear that technical instruments and machines (like cars, and musical instruments) were intertwined with humans who automatically operate devices in a Benjaminian state of distraction (see above) between consciousness and unconsciousness. The video suggests that the enigmatic power of music inspires not only humanoids to become alive, but, the music appeals to male and female youth as well and by doing so they may identify with a heterogeneous variety of identities. Also, the humanoids in the video revealed an ironic repetition of the same, i.e., the concealed uncanny machine in the shape of a human being. In a subversive strategy the humanoids are brought closer to human personality, a possible future threat to the current autocracy of man that has to be suppressed and can only be read between the lines in the subverted Chinese character for “master” that reveals a displaced symbolic resistance. In light of the video’s narrative, the final motif of the blinding spotlight can refer to the event of an open future to come and also to the authority conflict on a symbolic level, pointing to a status of lack and powerlessness that is congruent with the subaltern youth’ fears of being dominated and socially insignificant.

We compared lead singer Bill’s enigmatic stage image of the 2010 live performance with the historical musical discourse (punk, and electronic music). His (post)modern body image between the genders generates a connection between human and machine that was read with Haraway’s concept of the cyborg and signifies another side of modern technology, i.e., instead of a fear of the uncanny rather an identification with the (wo)man-machine in the figuration of a cute cyborg that holds the promise of a new identity construction. Did the uncanny humanoid lose the uncanniness? Bill’s

live stage persona and the humanoids' image at the end of the video tear apart the view of a dichotomy of humans and non-humans as being exactly distinguishable from one another, and in both, the fear of the uncanny is minimized by childlike characteristics.

In order to formulate this form of uncanniness, we can employ Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness from his paradigm for the postcolonial condition in *The Location of Culture*, where he discusses the "relocation of the home and the world" (Bhabha 13) in a cross-cultural world. Bhabha does not follow the tradition to translate Freud's term "das Unheimliche" as "the uncanny." His notion of the "unhomely" (ibid.) signifies the return of the repressed that makes the home sinister or uncanny. Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness describes the condition of the modern transnationalized world which makes the home not uninhabitable but incredible "unhomely" (ibid.). Dislocating and transposing this to our issue of the uncanniness in the image of the cyborg, we may say that the return of the repressed indicates an "un-humanly" condition of a modern transhumanist world to come. With this deferral, we reformulate the condition of this new body imagery as the return of the repressed, which makes the future human beings cyborgs who will not be inhumanly but still incredibly un-humanly. This is due to the visible modifications of the human image<sup>55</sup> which embody an anxiety-causing visitation by the expelled supposedly "authentic" or "natural" human image. In this view, our analysis of new formations of identity constructions demonstrates the general problem of the impact of cyber image onto culture, i.e., a hidden presence of the absent human body.

---

<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., the un-humanly appearance of the pop music singer Michael Jackson with his/her/its dissembled and reassembled collective/personal self constructed multiple identities (between gender and between ethnicity).

With our reinscription of unhomey as un-humanly, our transposition of Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness describes now the body in the age of the "cyber" and opens up the thinking of alterity, and the interstitial. Still, our reading of Tokio Hotel in cyberpunk-pop music implies that this split position between human and machine in the transhumanist technological world will be less frightening and may be exchanged for a kind of pleasure-feeling "monstrous" being. The humanoids in the 2009 video as well as the enigmatic speaking "I," and the stage image of Bill's 2010 live performance all seem to be in a place of in-between and show a hybridity. In this way, with our attempt to shift the term "Cyberpunk," we read powerful imageries especially for the female youth and other subaltern groups (Leipelt-Tsai 2011, 276) that stand for a broad movement in youth culture in Europe and beyond, and a queer way out of these dualisms since they enable protest and rebellion<sup>56</sup> against hierarchies, challenging domination, and reconstructing borders.

Following analysis, the question of the body in German cyberpunk pop music culture points to the beginning of a liquefaction of previously fixed terms such as the human condition, the Romanticist love discourse, and an intermediate space of something that was formerly thought of as a hierarchical division of technology and nature.<sup>57</sup> Tokio Hotel's new visual art conveys no explicit knowledge, rather it refers to something other, and points to what we may become in the future. The narrative of the rising humanoids in the video "Automatic" can be read with the Derridean concept of an advent of a future<sup>58</sup> that is already with us: the figurations of the cyborg in Tokio

---

<sup>56</sup> About concealed forms of youth protest, see especially British cultural theory, e.g., Mac Robbie, Angela. *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. London Routledge 1994; about "the (un)conscious politics" of articulation of the subaltern Tokio Hotel fans see Leipelt-Tsai 2011, 264.

<sup>57</sup> As technology can be considered a product of human beings, and humans belong to nature, human technology does not stand outside of nature.

<sup>58</sup> Derrida differentiates between the predictable future and the l'avenir (the 'to come') as an unexpected arrival; for the concept of the advent, see e.g., Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx*. New York: Routledge 1994, 64f.

Hotel indicates a disruption, an event that cannot be predicted and will have unforeseeable effects. The consequences of this should be contemplated: today, technology and the human body are already starting to interrelate not only technologically, as part of the outer body frame, but even emotionally.<sup>59</sup> However, despite more fusion through the social relations of science and technology, and in material-semiotic knots, dispersed and interfaced at the same time, we should not forget that we still have a responsibility within these new constructions of boundaries.

We problematized the prospective negotiation for identity of the youth with inspirational imageries of “cyberpunk”-pop music in German cultural studies, and demonstrated that the anthropomorphic hybridity of the cyborg as monstrous (post)modern body does not have to evoke the fear of the uncanny. It is not “only a promise of the new by remediating the old” (Bolter/Grusin, 270). The emotive power of Tokio Hotel’s images goes beyond a “fascination with both transparent and hypermediated technologies of representation” (ibid.) but beholds an openness of the future. With Haraway’s concept of the cyborg, the aesthetics of Tokio Hotel’s imagery produce a hybrid body image that indicates a future to come, i.e., a post-gendered world and a new kind of community based on affinity instead of oneness that will exclude hierarchical domination, is not based on the fixed term of ‘human’ and the so-called Western logos, and embodies an appeal to freedom and gender equality. This is particularly noteworthy because today’s youth is accustomed to virtual networking through new media forms, and their negotiation of social relations and symbolic resistance will be shaped by it. In our current world of science and technology, production and communication, a change is occurring and the boundaries between human organisms and machines is beginning to transform and perish. Arts drive social

---

<sup>59</sup> We may think of the youth’s dependence on mobile phones and tablets. Recently, one student described in class her relation to her cell phone as ‘love’ and insisted on this statement even after my comment that this term seems inappropriate.

change. While the ancient Greek prefix “kybér-” once signified control and a navigator’s art of control, the new “cyber” in German cyberpunk-pop music culture questions a one-sided control and indicates another more playful, split position from the navigators to come.

## Works Cited

- “主人,” Bab.la dictionary Chinese English, <<http://en.bab.la/dictionary/chinese-english/%E4%B8%BB%E4%BA%BA>>. 2 Mar 2015.
- Anitai, Tamar. “O Music Awards: Tokio Hotel Wins Fan Army FTW Award!” MTV News Celebrity, <<http://www.mtv.com/news/2297943/o-music-awards-tokio-hotel-fan-army-mtv-omas/>>. 9 Jul 2017.
- “automatic,” Wiktionary English, <<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/automatic>>. 9 Jul 2017.
- “automatisch,” dict.cc. Deutsch-Englisch-Wörterbuch, <<http://www.dict.cc/deutsch-englisch/automatisch.html>>. 9 Jul 2017.
- “automatisch,” Duden online. Rechtschreibung, <<http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/automatisch>>. 9 Jul 2017.
- Bachmann-Medick, Doris. “Culture as Text: Reading and Interpreting Cultures.” Neumann, Birgit, Ansgar Nünning. Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, 99-118.
- Bader, Bianka. “Bill ist halt nicht so hundertprozentig dieser Hardcore Typ.” Eine empirische Untersuchung zu Männlichkeitsinszenierungen der Pop-Gruppe “Tokio-Hotel” und deren Rezeption durch Fans. Flensburg: Flensburg Univ. Press, 2008.
- Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. (1994) With a preface by the author. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Barry, Dan. “Realizing It’s a Small, Terrifying World After All.” The New York Times. This Land. Orlando Shooting, 20.06.2016. “2016 Orlando nightclub shooting,” <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/21/us/orlando-shooting-america.html?rref=collection%2Fnewseventcollection%2F2016-orlando->

- shooting&action=click&contentCollection=us&region=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection>. 26 Apr 2017.
- Benjamin, Walter. Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter der technischen Reproduzierbarkeit.
- Benjamin, Walter. Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1977, 136-169.
- Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. Remediation. Understanding New Media. Cambridge (UK): MIT Press, 1999.
- Brake, Michael. Comparative youth culture. The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1985.
- Butler, Andrew M. Cyberpunk. The Pocket Essential. Harpenden (UK): Oldcastle Books Ltd, 2000.
- “Billy Idol - Making Of Cyberpunk + ABC In Concert Interview With Billy And Timothy Leary – 1993,” MTV News report, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zcq-KHzHkY&feature=youtu.be>>. 10 Jul 2017.
- “Billy Idol - Shock to the system” (“Cyberpunk” Album) official video, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx2fZU5USus&feature=youtu.be>>. 9 Jul 2017.
- “Björk - All is Full of Love” (Official Music Video) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjI2J2SQ528>>. 6 Mar 2015.
- “Bruce Springsteen - Blinded by the Light,” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uozMTmEjxHc>>. 5 Jul 2017.
- Cadora, Karen. “Feminist Cyberpunk.” Graham J. Murphy and Sherryl Vint (Eds.) Beyond Cyberpunk. New York: Routledge, 2010, 157-172.
- “Cyber,” Wikipedia Deutsch, <<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyber>>. 8 Mar 2015.

“Cybergoth,” Wikipedia English, <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybergoth>>. 8 Mar 2015.

“The Cardigans. My Favourite Game.” Youtube, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsMUQK4jdsQ>>. 28 May 2017.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Diederichsen, Diedrich. *Über die Popmusik*. 2nd edition, Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2014.

Doris Leibetseder. *Queere Tracks. Subversive Strategien in der Rock- und Popmusik*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2010.

Freud, Sigmund. “Das Unheimliche.” *Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften V* (1919), 297–324, <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34222/34222-h/34222-h.htm>>. 02 May 2017.

Fuchs-Ganböck, Michael. Thorsten Schatz. *Jetzt und wir. Neue deutsche Bands zwischen Soundcheck und Lebensgefühl*. Munich: Knauer, 2008.

Hall, Stuart. “What is this ‘black’ in black popular culture?” Hall, Stuart. *Critical dialogues in cultural studies*. Ed. Morely, David, and Kuan-Hsing Chen. New York: Routledge, 1996, 465-475.

Haraway, Donna. “A manifesto for Cyborgs. Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980’s.” (1984). Neil Badmington und Julia Thomas (Eds.) *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. London, New York: Routledge, 2008, 324-355.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. (1807) Stuttgart, Reclam: 1996, <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/phanomenologie-des-geistes-1656/1>>. 7 Mar 2015.

“Humanoid City Live DVD – Automatic,” <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U2zY43z3sM>>, 21 July 2014.

Kross, Karin L. "Cyberpunk Bowie, New Wave Bowie: A look at Scary Monsters."

TOR Com the imprint, Bowie week, 11. Jan. 2012,

<<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2012/01/bowie-week-scary-monsters>>. 6 Aug 2014.

"Kraftwerk – live at the museum." Deutsche Welle. PopXport extra, 17 Aug. 2013,

<[http://www.dw.de/popxport-special-9-kraftwerk-2013-08-17/e-16969142-](http://www.dw.de/popxport-special-9-kraftwerk-2013-08-17/e-16969142-9798)

9798>. 28 Oct 2014.

Leipelt-Tsai, Monika. "Tokio Hotel. Articulation of the Subaltern in German Pop

Culture?" ' . Ed. Chang, Tai-Lin. *New Trends in Contemporary European*

*Literature, Culture and Language*. Taipei: National Chengchi University, Institute

of Foreign Languages, European Culture Research Center, 2011, 245-280.

Leipelt-Tsai, Monika. "Tokio Hotel. Translating German Pop Culture." *Guang Yi*.

*Lingual, Literary, and Cultural Translation*. Translation Center, College of

Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Chengchi University, No. 3, Taipei,

Jan. 2010, 101-128.

Lethen, Helmut, Annegret Pelz, Michael Rohrwasser. "Vorwort." (Preface) Idem

(Eds.) *Konstellationen – Versuchsanordnungen des Schreibens*. Göttingen:

Vienna Univ. Press, 2013, 7-10.

"let your hair down," Cambridge Dictionaries Online,

<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/let-your-hair-down>>, 01 Mar

2015.

Mac Robbie, Angela. *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Mori, Masahiro. "The Uncanny Valley." (1970) *Robotics & Automation Magazine*,

IEEE, June 2012, 19 (2), 98–100,

<<http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/articleDetails.jsp?arnumber=6213238>>; 9 Jan

2015.

"Mohawk," Wikipedia English, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohawk\\_hairstyle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohawk_hairstyle)>. 7

Jan 2015.

“oid,” Wiktionary English, <<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/-oid>>. 11 Jan 2015.

Phantastikpreis der Stadt Wetzlar. Phantastische Bibliothek Wetzlar,

<<http://www.phantastik.eu/veranstaltungen/wetzlarer-tage-der-phantastik-uebersicht>>. 23 Sep 2014.

“punk rock,” Shuker, Roy. *Key Concepts in Popular Music*. London: Routledge, 1998, 237-239.

“punk,” Online Etymology Dictionary,

<<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=punk>>. 8 Jun 2017.

“punk,” Shuker, Roy. *Key Concepts in Popular Music*. London: Routledge, 1998, 236f.

Rumpf, Wolfgang. “Lob der Dilettanten: Kanonisierungen des Punk in der Zeitschrift *Sounds 1977/1978*.” Helms, Dietrich, Thomas Phleps (Eds.) *No time for Losers. Charts, Listen und andere Kanonisierungen in der populären Musik*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2008, 113-125.

“Rammstein. Mercedes.” Youtube,

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcWKGy5HXUc>>. 28 May 2017.

Schulenburg, Mathias. “Keine Spielereien.” *Deutschlandfunk. Kalenderblatt*. 21 Nov. 2007, <[http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/keine-spielereien.871.de.html?dram:article\\_id=126066](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/keine-spielereien.871.de.html?dram:article_id=126066)>. 11 Jan 2015.

Seibt, Oliver. “Asagi’s Voice. Learning how to Desire with Japanese Visual-kei.” Utz, Christian, Frederick Lau (Eds.) *Vocal Music and Contemporary Identities: Unlimited Voices in East Asia and the West*. New York: Routledge, 2013, 248-266.

“Shock to the System (Billy Idol song),” Wikipedia English,

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock\\_to\\_the\\_System\\_%28Billy\\_Idol\\_song%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock_to_the_System_%28Billy_Idol_song%29)>.

26 Jun 2017.

“Shock to the System (Billy Idol song)”, Wikipedia English,

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock\\_to\\_the\\_System\\_%28Billy\\_Idol\\_song%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock_to_the_System_%28Billy_Idol_song%29)>.

26 May 2017.

“Tokio Hotel. Best of. German version.” Universal Music GmbH, CD. EU: 2010.

“Tokio Hotel. Making of Automatic.” Official music video part 3, 12 Nov. 2009,

Youtube, <<http://youtu.be/OKPHfo1Ltcw>>. 26 Feb 2015

“Tokio Hotel.” Deutsche Welle. PopXport. Special, 27 Feb. 2015,

<<http://www.dw.de/programm/popxport/s-7851-9800>>. 1 Mar 2015.

“Tokio Hotel.” Wikipedia Deutsch, <[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokio\\_Hotel](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokio_Hotel)>. 10

Jan 2015.

---. - Dogs unleashed (live),” Welcome to Humanoid City Tour in Esch/Luxemburg

22.02.2010 Rockhal (HD), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEIIvIZFGvE>>.

7 Mar 2015.

---. “Tokio Hotel. Translating German Pop Culture.” Guang Yi. Lingual, Literary, and

Cultural Translation. Translation Center, College of Foreign Languages and

Literatures, National Chengchi University, No. 3, Taipei, January 2010, 101-128.

---. Automatic.” YouTube, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhIlqBqRtuw>>. 5 Jul

2017.

---. Humanoid.” Universal Music GmbH, CD. EU: 2009.

---. Making of ‘Automatic’ ” in South Africa, 26th August 2009, Tokio Hotel

Buzzworthy Video, <<http://youtu.be/SXAdmGxc2hc>>, 28 Feb 2015.

Vedder, Ulrike. “Mit schiefem Mund auch ‘Heimat’ ” - Heimat und Nation in Libuše

Moníkovás Texten. Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und

Literatur, 89.4 (Winter 1997), 477-488.